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colors; but similar folly is too constantly committed by our modern opera composers;—they daub their melodies with thick tone-color until they disappear. It is nothing uncommon for an aria, for instance, which excites little or no effect when performed in its opera, to please when accompanied on the pianoforte. This is easily explained:—the melody is then relieved of its superfluous instrumentation, and gains its appropriate importance.

Furthermore, the moderns construct too small melodies,—unconnected melodious sentences,—undeveloped melody-seeds. A continuous melody of eight bars duration appears to them a too “habitual” creation,—a too clear and simple—abomination. And as to writing a second section, to give symmetry to the whole!—if ever they be visited by melodious inspiration, they quickly shake it from them, in order to plunge again into their scientific hurly-burly. Verily, they are infanticides; for no sooner have they been delivered of a melody, than they strangle or smother it. They resemble, not the nightingale, but the stormy petrel, who feels most at ease amidst howling winds and roaring waves.

On this account, they entrust all expression of violent passion to their darling orchestra, which, under their spiritual direction, storms and rages, puffs and blows, roars and surges, until the voice of a singer is completely overpowered and drowned;—we hear him no longer,—we merely see how he desperately strides about the stage, and, like a speaker on the hustings, strainingly endeavours to gain a hearing above the wild noise of assembled multitudes. Singers are now no longer enabled to produce those powerful, exciting, and pathetic effects, which the varied human voice is capable of affording in passionate situations. A whole host of horns, trumpets, trombones, drums, kettle-drums, piccolo-flutes, &c., &c., are arrayed in the battle-field against him.

Many of my readers have doubtless heard the great Schrödter-Devrient in *Fidelio*, and remember the prison-scene, in which, while the orchestra remains dead-silent, she thunders forth: “First kill his wife!” Everyone who has heard this will feel a thrill at even the recollection of the extraordinary emotion these few words called forth in his soul. Notwithstanding, however, that such convincing facts stand before them, our moderns believe that they forward the “progress” of operatic composition by trying to depict strong passions in their perverse fashion.

In operatic music, *passion can only be faithfully and appropriately expressed by the human voice*. I will admit that, in order to support or to add to effect, an orchestra may burst forth during the pauses in song, but must subdue its thunders whenever the human voice *sings*. Unfortunately, no opera composer has thoroughly attended to this law,—not even Mozart, at all times.

I could quote many wondrously beautiful examples, besides the one already mentioned, in which highest passion is expressed by the voice, while orchestral power is subdued; for instance, the song of Simon and his brothers, in the first act of Méhul’s *Joseph in Egypt*,—in which Simon utters his remorse and despair while his brothers endeavour to tranquilise and console him.

In addition to all that I have already adduced, modern opera-composers do not understand how to *characterise* persons and situations. We generally hear, in new operas, not the personæ of the piece, but the vanity and errors of the composer. For *each* piece they employ the same instrumentation (almost always the full orchestra), the same rhythms, the same harmonies, &c., &c. A painter who introduces all colors into every picture, and into each part of his picture, is at best a dauber, but no artist. If our moderns would only examine the opera-scores of our great Mozart! In them, each part is different from all others, and individually characteristic,—a self-contained, living impersonation. Let them, above all, study the *Zauberflöte*, in order to learn the means by which a true musician can elevate each personage into—a character!

#### THE CRYSTAL PALACE.

THE programme advertised for the summer months affords evidence of increased activity in the management of the undertaking, and a desire to increase the accommodation for visitors. The musical arrangements are calculated to give very general satisfaction. It appears that there is to be an additional band of wind instruments, to be stationed principally in the grounds, in order to attract the company to the most beautiful localities. There will also be a regular and more popular use of the great organ, so that frequent opportunities may occur of hearing that noble instrument.

The musical programme will consist, in the early part of each day, of a performance on the organ; the first part of a concert by the orchestral band; then a joint performance by the two bands, stringed and wind; and the music by the wind band in the grounds until the close of the Palace.

Popular sports and pastimes are to receive additional attention; cricket, archery, and bowling, are to be encouraged, and a gymnasium and maze established; and increased facilities will be afforded for the visits of societies, and the working staffs of large firms, for holding their annual gatherings at the Palace. There are to be three flower shows and two poultry shows in the season. The directors have also under consideration the establishment of an art-union, on the same principle as those of London, Edinburgh, and Glasgow; not confined, however, to painting, but the other ornamental and useful arts. It is also in contemplation to commence a series of lectures on the varied natural, scientific, and artistic contents of the Crystal Palace.

Among the special objects of interest in the coming season, there will be a grand choral performance by the metropolitan chorus of the Handel Festival; performances by the chorals of Bradford and Yorkshire,—by the children of the Tonic Sol-Fa Association,—by Mr. Henry Leslie’s choir; concerts by the band of the Paris Garde Nationale; and a great choral demonstration by 5,000 children of the national schools in and around London. The usual Saturday concerts, under the direction of Mr. Manns, will also be greatly improved.

The refreshment department is in course of re-organization; and new dining-rooms and smoking-rooms are being provided by the contractors with as much expedition as their nature and extent will permit. The season tickets will be one uniform price, viz., one guinea, admitting to the Palace on all occasions and fêtes; but the directors have "reserved to themselves the power of withholding the right of admission to the holders of these tickets on special days, not exceeding six in number during the year, should they find it for the interests of the company to do so for any additional fêtes, or extraordinary attractions beyond those already announced." The season commences on the 1st of May.

A new orchestra is in course of erection in the centre transept, which, besides being better adapted to the building, will also be an acoustical improvement.

The largest and purest gold nugget yet discovered will also be exhibited. It weighs 1,743oz. 8dwt., and is of the computed value of £7,500. No less than £10,000 was offered for it at Melbourne.

The collection of photographic views, by Messrs. Negretti and Zambra, photographers to the Crystal Palace, has received within the last few days some most interesting additions, being a large number of views taken immediately after the late earthquake in Naples.

It will be seen from this short statement of the programme, that the attractions for the forthcoming season are of such a nature as to ensure the support and patronage of the public.

#### TAXES ON KNOWLEDGE.

At the ninth anniversary meeting of the Association for promoting the Repeal of the Taxes on Knowledge, Mr. Milner Gibson announced that he intended shortly to bring the subject of the Repeal of the Paper Duty before the House of Commons. The committee expressed a hope that their friends would use every exertion to obtain signatures to a petition to Parliament, for the purpose of furthering this most desirable object. Forms of petition may be obtained on application, either personally or by post, at the office of the Association, No. 10, Ampton-place, Gray's Inn-road.

A deputation from the society, including Mr. M. Gibson, M.P., Mr. Bright, M.P., Mr. Ayrton, M.P., Mr. H. Ingram, M.P., Mr. Craufurd, M.P., Messrs. Collet (secretary), Wilson, Moore, and Elt, waited upon the Earl of Derby, on the 15th ult., to urge upon his Lordship the Repeal of the Paper Duty. A memorial was read, in which it was objected to the Paper Duty that it impeded instruction, hindered the extension of the manufacture, and was injurious to the revenue. In the second part of the memorial, complaint was made of the enactments of the law under which persons establishing newspapers are required to give security for the payment of fines or penalties to which they may never become liable under the law of libel.

Several members of the deputation addressed his Lordship, who said he was quite prepared to agree, in a great measure, with what had been urged on the subject of the Paper Duty, and no doubt the regulations of the assize added to the difficulty in the way of operators in the trade. Unfortunately, at the present time, the affairs of the State were such that an increased expenditure was rendered necessary. If it had been otherwise, and there had been an overflowing Exchequer, he should have approved very much of a proposition to take off the Duty on Paper. It would add very greatly to the difficulties of the £1,000,000, which was the amount derived from the Paper Government if they had to provide for so large a sum as Duty, and he was afraid that for the present year he could hold out no hopes to the deputation. He admitted, however, that the Paper Duty was a tax which, both in principle and detail, was open to grave objections, and which it would be most desirable to repeal.

#### TO CORRESPONDENTS.

*The late hour at which Advertisements reach us, interferes much with their proper classification.*

*All communications must be authenticated by the proper name and address of the writer, not necessarily for publication.*

*Colored Envelopes are sent to all Subscribers whose payment in advance is exhausted. The paper will be discontinued where the Subscriber neglects to renew. We again remind those who are disappointed in getting back numbers, that only the music pages are stereotyped, and of the rest of the paper, only sufficient are printed to supply the current sale.*

*We would request those who send us country newspapers, wishing us to read particular paragraphs, to mark the passage, by cutting a slit in the paper near it.*

*We cannot undertake to return offered contributions; the authors, therefore, will do well to retain copies.*

*Notices of concerts and other information supplied by our friends in the country, must be forwarded as early as possible after the occurrence,—otherwise they cannot be inserted. It frequently occurs, that letters and papers respecting concerts which have taken place early in the month, do not reach us till the day of publication.*

#### Brief Chronicle of the last Month.

**ABINGDON.**—A classical and popular selection of music was given on the 22nd of April, in the Town Hall, for the benefit of the Mechanics' Institute. The music was performed by amateurs of the town, with the aid of professional vocal students, under the management of Mr. Edward Shepherd. It is satisfactory to learn that the funds of the institute will be greatly benefitted by the concert.

**BARROW-IN-FURNESS.**—The members of the Barrow Choral Society gave a concert of vocal music (sacred and secular), in the School-room, Barrow, on the 13th of April. The society is greatly indebted to the lady members, who have come forward most readily in establishing this society, which now can be classed amongst the first societies of the locality. The accompaniments were well executed by Mr. Gallop.

**BIRMINGHAM.**—The Festival Choral Society performed *Elijah*, for the first time, on the 6th of April, in the Town Hall. The principal parts were sung by Mrs. Sunderland, Mrs. Hayward, Mr. Miranda, and Mr. Thomas. The choruses were admirably given, and the whole performance was most creditable to the society. Much praise is due to the conductor, Mr. Stockley, for his zeal and energy in getting up this oratorio. Mr. Stimpson presided at the organ, and the band was led by Mr. Hayward.

**BLYTH.**—On Good Friday evening, Fawcett's oratorio, entitled *Paradise*, was performed, under the auspices of the Blyth Harmonic Society. The chorus, numbering about 80, was strengthened by several members of the Tynemouth Sacred Harmonic Society. The principal solo singers were Misses Green and Redpath, Messrs. Robson, Barker, and Hindhaugh. Mr. S. Liddle accompanied on the harmonium, Mr. Wood conducted, and Mr. Henderson led the band.

**BRINKLOW (Coventry).**—A concert, consisting of glees, part-songs, &c., was given here on the 19th of April. The principal vocalists were Miss Ashmore and Mr. Ashmore. Miss Haynes accompanied on the pianoforte.

**CANTERBURY.**—The Canterbury Catch Club, conducted by Mr. Longhurst, concluded its 78th season on the 7th of April, when the room was well filled with members and visitors, who evidently enjoyed the excellent concert provided for their entertainment.

**CANTERBURY.**—The Canterbury Apollonian Club, under the able direction of Messrs. G. Nicholson and Tench

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